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On Sept. 11 a Sabine Gull (Xema sabini) was seen in Tacoma Harbor. As the bird was only 20 yards from the boat there can be no doubt as to the identification. The black on the primaries marks it from the Bonaparte Gull at a glance. An unusual thing about this bird was that it was in summer plumage, while all the Bonapartes in the harbor were in winter plumage.

Several times I have found it difficult to retrieve birds when collecting from a boat. If one would take a large net such as fishermen use as a landing net, which could be fastened to a pike pole, one would have no trouble in retrieving birds after they are shot. I used this method on the "Lady Helen" and found it not only much quicker than any other method, but that it frequently saved the trouble of launching a small boat.

On Sept. 13 and 19 I spent two days with Mr. Rust at Nisqually, Thurston County, Wn., and found the Northern Phalaropes (Lobipes lobatus) very common at this place. They all appeared to be the same bird. One was collected and it proved to be the Northern Phalarope.

Notes from Pierce County, Washington.
by J. Hooper Bowles.

The nesting season of 1920 was an interesting one in many ways. The usual varieties of birds were plentiful, but none of the rarer ones were any more numerous than usual. Perhaps the most striking fact of all was the almost invariable delay of all kinds in the dates for nest building. With hardly an exception everything was just about three weeks later than usual. A very marked exception to this was the Hermit Warblers, which nested during the first week in June as usual. No other bird of my acquaintance is so unswervingly regular in its habits as this handsome warbler, for if we do not find the nest before the 15th of June there is no chance whatever of getting eggs. Also, at the other extreme, we need never hope to find eggs before the 3rd. of June at the earliest. I was so fortunate as to find a nest containing five well incubated eggs on June 10th, which were prepared into perfect specimens. On June 18 I located another nest, but the unvarving time limit had gone by and the nest held very small young, five in number. This nest was only fifteen feet up in a sickly little twenty-five foot fir that had only three branches. A most unexpected situation for this lover of the giant timber to build her home.

Another unusual find was also made on June 18 in the nest of a California Creeper containing eight eggs. This is the largest set of Creeper of any kind that has been brought to my attention, and only once before have I found as many as seven eggs. Oddly enough it was the second set laid by this same pair of birds during the season, the first set containing six eggs having been collected off June 1 by Mr. Thomas H. Burleigh. While Mr. Burleigh was busy taking this first nest, it occurred to me to pass the time by building a bark Creeper "decoy" nest on a small oak some forty feet distant. When passing the place on June 4 I glanced into the "decoy" and was pleased to find my experiment successful, the birds having a new nest well under process of construction. It was this nest that had the eight eggs on the 18th, incubation being several days advanced, which proved that the birds had built a fine large nest and laid eight eggs in the extremely short time of two weeks. It is also noteworthy that the second set contained two eggs more than were in the first, although I have frequently noticed that second sets of various birds contain an egg more than the first set. I do not wish to imply that this is the rule, but it occurs sufficiently often to convince me

that egg collecting in moderation must have almost no effect whatever upon the bird population.

Concerning the gamebirds, the Sooty Grouse seems to be holding its own, especially in the Pierce County Game Reserve. California Quail seem to be slightly on the increase, but I saw no Mountain Quail anywhere. It was very gratifying to notice an increase in the numbers of Oregon Ruffed Grouse, of which at least three broods of young were noted. During the past few years this grouse has been on the verge of extermination in the vicinity of Tacoma. Ring-necked Pheasants were scarcer than I have known them to be since their introduction to the county. A large number of Mallards nested in our marshes and around the lakes, but it is doubtful if a great many of the young reached maturity. However, until the Crow is taken off the protected list and somewhat reduced in numbers, we cannot expect anything but a shortage in many of our gamebirds. Another thing that is destroying many of our marsh birds, including ducks, is the practice of burning the marsh grass during the breeding season. I have found quantities of nests containing eggs or young that had been roasted in this manner. Marshes should never be burned over between the first of April and the first of July at earliest.

An interesting record for the west side of the Cascades is a nest containing four eggs of the Bittern, which I found near Tacoma on June 27, almost ready to hatch. So far as I am aware it is the first nesting record for the state. The Bittern is one of the interesting changes that is likely to occur at any time in bird population, as it is only during the past two or three years that this bird has been other than a very rare fall migrant. At present I know of only one other pair that spends the summer here.

Varied Thrushes and Western Evening Grosbeaks were plentiful in the vicinity of Tacoma all through the nesting season, but no signs of their nests were found.

In regard to the set of Marbled Murrelet I/I, collected this summer and presented to me by Mr. C. de B. Green, there is room for a possible doubt, as no bird was on the nest, although an adult with a young one unable to fly was collected a few yards off the island. A comparison of this egg with eggs of other Murrelets shows it to be the same size as an average egg of the Xantus' Murrelet, as might be expected from the similarity of the birds. It is much smaller than any of my eggs of the Ancient Murrelet. In color it is between Xantus' and Ancient, but in texture of shell differs from either of them. It was the only Murrelet nest found on the island amongst a liberal representation of Cassin's Auklets and Fork-tailed Petrels.

Shorebirds have been exceedingly late in reaching Tacoma this fall, even the smaller sandpipers being very scarce until about August 25. On that date those seen seemed to have only just come, as they were wild and unsettled in their actions. The same may be said of the Greater Yellow-legs, which were fairly numerous on that date. On August 27 Greater Yellow-legs were very common, and one Yellow-legs and one Baird's Sandpiper were studied at close range. All were very tame on this date, and it was interesting to see the very characteristic habit of swimming in the smaller species of Yellow-legs. In fact this bird put in fully as much time swimming as it did wading, and at first sight I mistook it for a Wilson's Phalarope. Another visit to the flats on Sept. 4 showed two Long-billed Dowitchers and a Wilson's Snipe, the first seen this fall. A flock of seven Yellow-legs was closely studied, their interesting habit of swimming being so in evidence that at one time the whole flock were paddling over their depth. Close at hand several huge female Greater Yellow-legs were wading. These seemed very large when compared with the males of their own species,

but the close contrast with the smaller variety made them appear almost like herons. The first migratory Savannah Sparrows were noticed on Sept. 4, their larger size and darker coloration making them at once recognizable from our small local bird, Brooks. None were collected, but there is little doubt that they were the birds identified for me by Dr. Joseph Grinnell as Passerculus sandwichensis savanna. These birds usually become extremely abundant in September.

Observation by Charles de B. Green, Marron Lake, B.C.

Northwest Fish Crow.

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On the 20th of April, 1914, being camped on Langara Island, B.C. with an Indian, I was astonished to hear what seemed like young crows being fed. On the beach were about twenty crows, and several of these were behaving exactly like young just out of the nest whilst the mothers were feeding them.

What really happens is hardly less interesting, and light was thrown on it in 1916, when watching a rookery at Vibrey-sur-Marne in France. There was a rookery of several hundred nests and the birds were beginning to set. The males were feeding the females at the nest, and when he arrived, the hen received the food in the same manner as a young bird, flopping its wings and making the same swallowing noise.

There can be no doubt but that the female crow asks for food from the male as soon as she feels the maternal instinct in the spring, and gets it.

An off day on Graham Island.

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After watching Townsend Warbler and Kadiac Pine Grosbeak building nests 400 yards from each other on the 6th of June, 22 miles from Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, it was with some hope of good luck that I walked back 14 days later, but it was no surprise or bitter disappointment to an old hand at the game to find both nests deserted. There had been heavy rain and wind whilst the nests were under construction and it seems likely that a nest begun in fine weather sometimes shows itself badly placed when the first bad weather comes, and is deserted. Nest building is such a rapid and simple affair that unless the young are hatched, nests are often deserted in bad weather, and sometimes even young.

The Townsend had been using coarse moss gathered high up on the dead branches of neighboring trees when first seen building her nest in the usual site, i.e. saddled on a spruce limb under the short sprigs which grow along the upper side, 50 feet from the ground and 8 feet out from the trunk. Lashing three boughs together and carrying the rope to the trunk 20 feet or so above the nest bough, I was able to get out and look into the nest. It had been deserted when about ready for eggs.

The same day I found two more Townsend nests, but with young. These nests with young are easily found because, though the nest is generally from 50 to 100 feet up and quite invisible from above or below even with glasses, the parents feed the young with insects caught on the lower limbs and trunks of the neighboring trees. At first one thinks